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SUBJECT: PERU PARTIES SIGN ETHICAL ELECTION PACT GEARING UP FOR 2006

**¶1.** SUMMARY: Twenty-one political parties and organizations signed a comprehensive "Ethical Elections Pact" (EEP) on 4/28. The EEP signatories agreed to conform to existing legal limits on when, where, and what type of political propaganda can be promoted, as well as the prohibition against using State resources for campaigns. The agreement also includes provisions requiring candidates to submit written summaries of their qualifications and in-depth plans for how they would govern. The EEP is a positive step, and includes compliance mechanisms designed to ensure that violators are subjected to public censure. END SUMMARY.

**¶2.** On 4/28, twenty-one political parties, including all leading contenders for the Presidency, signed the Ethical Elections Pact (EEP) pledging to reject dirty politics and avoid empty campaign promises. The agreement was drafted by the National Electoral Board (JNE) in conjunction with the National Accord (an official forum made up of major political parties, labor centrals, and civil society organizations), the Civil Association Transparencia, the Andean Commission of Jurists, and International IDEA (Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance). The pact includes commitments to abide by electoral law provisions, as well as new commitments not currently in the law.

**¶3.** The EEP begins with a commitment to a just and transparent general election process focusing on ideas and programs in lieu of personal attacks and aggressive or intimidating politicking. To better inform the electorate, the EEP commits parties and candidates to submit to the JNE detailed plans for government and their curriculum vitae and qualifications. Both are new commitments not currently in GOP law. The plans for government aim beyond a party platform with candidates obliged to describe their near and long-term government program proposals and how they will fund and implement these proposals. The EEP, in conformance with existing law, also limits the content of election propaganda and where and when it may be displayed. Prohibited election advertisements include anything that offends or denigrates political competition or uses religious themes. Restrictions on diffusion include explicit hours for loudspeakers, written permission requirements for use of private buildings, and prohibitions on the use of official public buildings. Additional limitations on campaigning are in effect 24 hours before election day.

**¶4.** The EEP, in conformance with existing law, requires neutrality by State officials in elections. Ninety days before the election, officials running for re-election are prohibited from inaugurating or inspecting public works, speaking about their political competitors during official events, and using any government funds for the benefit of the campaign. The EEP also covers media obligations, and the media is requested to promote the pact, provide informative coverage of the political organizations, and respect the dignity of candidates. Lastly, the EEP includes a commitment by the signatories to clean-up public areas after the elections are completed via a "Ciudad Limpia" campaign.

**¶5.** The EEP includes a mechanism for judging whether signatories are complying via a new Honor Tribunal. This Tribunal will hear complaints and allegations that are not/not under the purview of the JNE and establish procedures and penalties to be approved by the signatories. The Honor Tribunal will be composed of three civil society representatives appointed by consensus of the signatories. The Tribunal will seek to resolve issues without sanctions, but the signatories agree to abide by the decisions of the Tribunal.

**¶6.** Twenty seven parties were invited to sign the pact. The six who did not are: Resurgimiento Peruano, Y se llama Peru, Movimiento Nueva Izquierda, Nueva Mayoria, Cambio 90, and Si Cumple (the latter three are linked to ex-President Alberto Fujimori). Though their party representatives signed on to the agreement, Alan Garcia (APRA), Lourdes Flores (Popular Christian Party), and Valentín Paniagua (Accion Popular) did not personally attend the signing ceremony.

**¶7.** COMMENT: The EEP represents a maturation of the democratic process in Peru and should help to increase the strained public confidence in political parties. Though explicit sanctions and fines are currently limited to public officials who overstep their bounds in seeking re-election, public

embarrassment for noncompliance should provide teeth to the agreement. The proof will be in how the signatories behave under the campaign pressures when election day approaches next year. END COMMENT.

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